# CHAPEL TALKS

WILLIAM M. BROOKS

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# Chapel Talks

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BY

WILLIAM M. BROOKS

PRIVATELY PRINTED FOR
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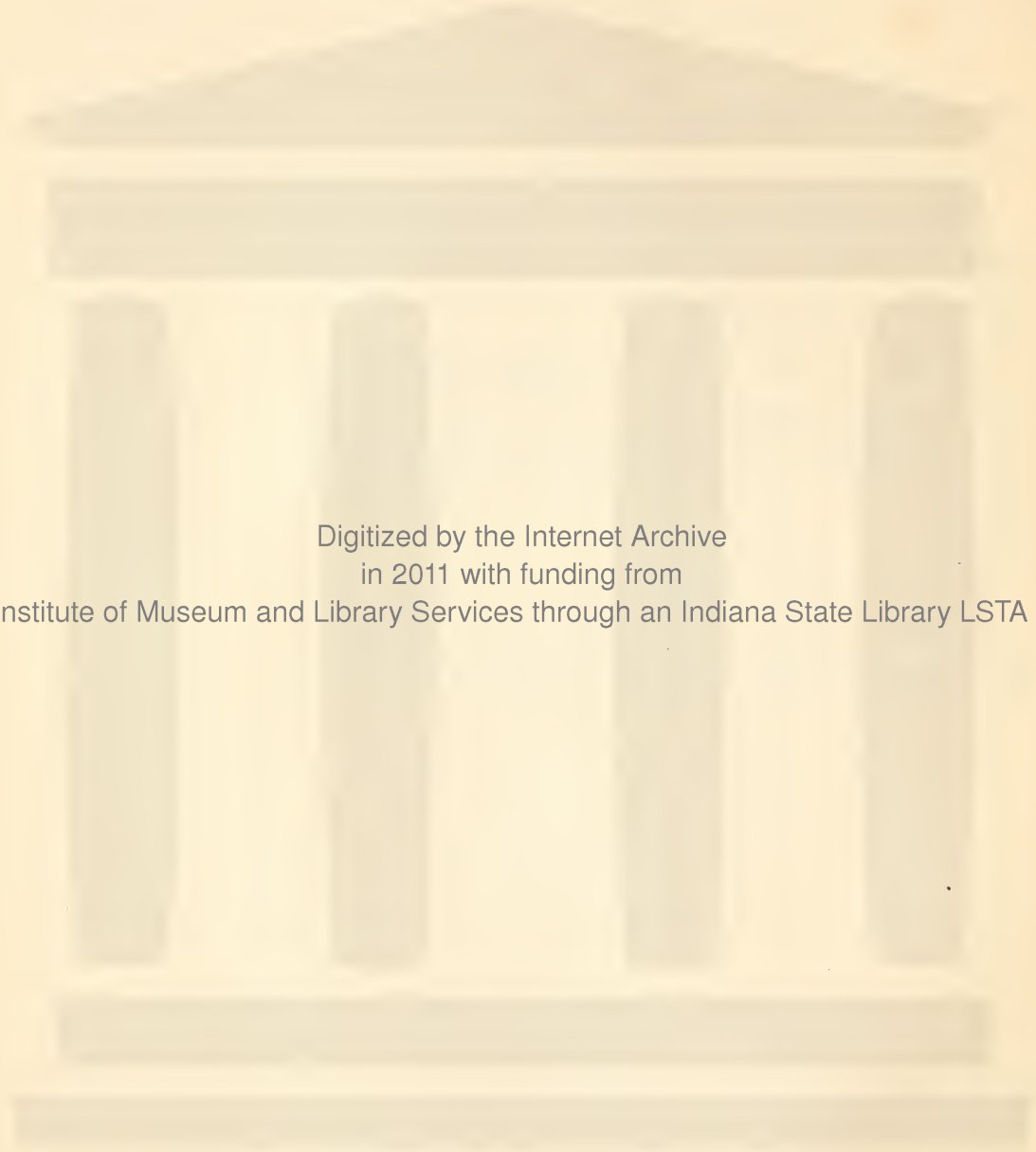
## *DEDICATION*

*These talks are dedicated to the teachers and students of Cumnock School—past, present and future.*

*Many of the teachers and students I have known intimately. My life has been richer and happier because of their friendship.*

*It is a great satisfaction to me—even though I am in my eighty-seventh year—to know I may still be a help to others.*



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## FOREWORD

Since September, 1916, I have been Chaplain of Cumnock School, and once a week have given to students and teachers a short talk in connection with the devotional services.

These talks have not been written before delivery. They have covered a wide range of topics—biographical sketches of Bible characters and others, personal experiences and subjects appropriate to especial occasions.

Because many who have heard these talks have expressed an interest in them, I have been requested to write some of them for publication.

At breakfast I give some sentiment for the day. A few of these quotations are printed with these talks.

W. M. B.

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*"Every little wayside flower that blows*
*And every little bird that sings*
*Has something greater than itself*
*And bears a message to every living thing.*
*A touch of the Eternal presence thrills the*
*fringes of the sunset and the hills"*

## THE NARROW WAY TO LIFE

### Matt. 7:7

A man once asked me, " If God is good as you say, why did he make the way to life straight and narrow and the way to destruction broad?" Did such thought ever trouble you? The way to life is necessarily straight and narrow because it is the right way, the obedient way. Every right way, every obedient way, is straight and narrow and cannot be otherwise.

Suppose I ask one of you to take this book and give it to Miss Phillips. There is only one way to be obedient to that request.

You might be willing to give it to any one of one hundred others in the room, you might be willing to take it to any room in the house or to any house in the city but so long as you refused to give it to Miss Phillips you would be disobedient. The way of obedience is a straight and narrow one, but there are a thousand ways of disobedience. This is true in every business.

The right way is narrow. Suppose you are trying to solve a problem in mathematics; if you are to get a correct result you must be careful at every step. If there is one mistake in addition, in multiplication, or division, you will not get the right result. Not one figure can be omitted nor one error made. There is but one right result and that is found in a straight and narrow way while there are a million wrong results.

If you go into a bank after the close of banking-hours, you may see a teller looking over the business of the day to balance his cash account. It is a straight and narrow way to that balance; not one check or deposit slip can be omitted, or one dime from the cash.

This same principle applies to every experience in life. The right way, the obedient way, is straight and narrow, the wrong way, the disobedient way, is broad. I remember when a school boy a copy in my writing book "There is no excellence without great labor." If one is to become a fine singer or an expert player on the piano or other instrument, it requires much patient practice. One cannot become a fine reader without long practice and careful study. This principle applies every where. Weeds grow

without cultivation, but choice grain and fruit must be cultivated.

The life reached by the straight and narrow way was once thought to refer exclusively to the life after these bodies had passed away. It is the life here and now with which we have to do. This obedient life is the only life worth living. It is the Christlike unselfish life which we are called upon to live every day.

God is always near to help us live this life. We do not always realize that God is near because he is invisible and sometimes we are not in harmony with him. Sometimes our minds are so full of other things God finds no room in our thoughts. He is near *us* though we may be far from *him.*

"In him we live and move and have our being." If God seems far away the reason is to be found in ourselves.

God speaks as truly today as he spoke to Moses at the burning bush or to Elijah at Mt. Horeb. Elijah came to himself. He listened to the "still small voice" within and said to himself, "How foolish I was to run away because a wicked woman threatened my life. How unreasonable for me to think that I alone cared for Jehovah, when I know there are many thousands as loyal

as I; God has work yet for me to do and I will do it." It was God thus speaking to him through his inner consciousness.

God speaks in our daily experience if only we have ears to hear. A small boy was in the habit of going to my brother's shop for shavings and kindlings for his mother's fire. One day the shop was closed. He saw a pile of fine dry wood and filled his basket, then straightening himself up he said to himself aloud, "This is Mr. Brooks's wood" and slowly repeated it again. Then he took the wood from the basket and put it on the pile. It was the still small voice of God which spoke to him. We call it conscience, but it is God speaking as surely as he spoke to Elijah.

For the health of these bodies we need exercise. For growth in the knowledge of God we need to take time to think and to commune with him. Let us remember that the way to life is narrow because it is the way of obedience, that to gain this way requires patient practice, that God is our father and is always near to help, that God speaks daily to those who will hear.

*"The night has a thousand eyes*
*And the day but one*
*Yet the light of the whole world dies*
*With the setting sun.*

*The mind has a thousand eyes*
*And the heart but one;*
*But the light of the whole life dies*
*When love is done."*

## LIFE ABUNDANTLY

"I came that they may have life and may have it abundantly."—John 10:10.

There is a mysterious something we call life but what it is, whence it comes, or whither it goes, no scientific research reveals.

Many books have been written telling how to live. State and city Boards of Health are often giving directions for healthful living, all showing that the physical life is important. Jesus did much to help men to a better physical life but he came to give a higher life, a spiritual life and to give it abundantly. The thought and work of most people are given to making a living and that is important, is essential, but only for the sake of making a life. A man may be successful in business and accumulate wealth and yet his life be a failure.

I was once at the home of a physician when he came in and said, "I have just come from an impressive scene, the death bed of a man of large

wealth. A little before he died he looked up and said to me, 'Oh doctor don't live to make money. I have lived to make money and have gained wealth, but my life has been a failure.'" He had made a living and more, but he had neglected to make life.

I once called upon a successful farmer who owned five thousand acres of land. He raised great quantities of corn which he fed to cattle and hogs. He sold the cattle and hogs for money with which to buy more land, on which to raise more corn, to feed more cattle and hogs.

He was not an unkind man, not a bad neighbor but he worked so hard he was too weary to give thought to the welfare of the world. His life seemed to be made up of that narrow round; land, corn, cattle, hogs, and he lost the life Jesus came to give. His mistake was not in having land and corn and cattle and hogs, but in giving his life to these things.

I knew another farmer who had more than ten thousand acres of land and raised more corn and fed more cattle and hogs, but he was interested in every thing that was likely to help people to live a better life. He gave time and thought and money to whatever promised to be a help to society.

I was once presiding at a public meeting and wanted some money for temperance work in the county.

I said, "Who will be one of ten to give ten dollars each?" He rose promptly and said, "I'll be five." He looked after the interests of his tenants and dealt liberally and sympathetically with them. He had large possessions, but his life did not center in them. His property was a help, not a hindrance, to his higher life. He gave his property and himself freely to make the world better and in his giving found his life.

The life which Jesus came to give is found by losing it, losing thought of self in what one may do for others.

In traveling from Cheyenne to Denver, I found the country for forty miles dry and barren. Suddenly all was changed. There were wheat fields and corn fields, flowers, fruitful gardens, and pleasant homes. Then we came to the city of Greeley, with several thousand inhabitants, yet only a few years before, this fruitful land was dry and barren. What had made the change? A mountain stream had been arrested in its course as it was rushing aimlessly toward the sea. A little of the water was drawn off to irrigate here a corn field, there a wheat field, then a gar-

den and fruit orchard, and this was repeated over and over again until one hundred thousand acres were made fruitful and the last of the water spread out upon the prairie and covered it with a restful carpet of green in place of the brown dry tufts of grass. The stream was lost, but its loss made possible fruitful fields and happy homes. The stream was lost but lived again in a more abundant life. So a mother loses her life for her children and lives again in their larger life. The faithful teacher gives her life for her students and finds it again in their lives of usefulness. "He that loseth his life shall find it." Jesus came to give spiritual life and to make all lift more worth while, to give a vision of our possibilities, to enable us to appreciate the best things and to help us reach our highest ideals. "I came that they may have life and may have it abundantly." What does it mean to give abundantly? It depends upon the resources of the giver. If one has little and gives all he can, he gives abundantly even though to one who has unlimited resources the same giving would be stingy. Many years ago I was driving across the prairies of Iowa with my wife and three children. We had been riding all day. It was evening, near

nine o'clock. The ponies we were driving were tired, the little colt was tired, we were all tired. For three hours we had tried in vain to find a place to rest for the night. We were slowly climbing a long hill. The baby was crying and was not to blame for crying. We all felt more like crying than laughing.

At the top of the hill we saw a small log house in which lived two old people. The cry of the baby brought them to the street. Could we stay all night? "Yes, glad to have you stay." They did not inquire how many there were. They did not say they had little room. Their hearts were as big as if they lived in a palace.

One of the children had a bed on the floor, one on a dry goods box, but they treated us royally. They gave the best they had and gave it heartily. We felt no lack of conveniences. Their hospitality was abundant and left an impression never to be forgotten. If we had stayed with one who had any vacant rooms and had been given the same accommodations it would have been an insult. What is it for the Lord of Heaven and earth with unlimited resources to give life abundantly?

Jesus came to give a life not self centered but

that overflows in good will to all about us, not the physical life which ends in a few years but the spiritual life, the immortal life, which we may enter upon here and now but which never ends.

*"We all know things that another should do;*
*His faults are like books on our shelves.*
*We can ponder them over and read and review,*
*Be we haven't a book on ourselves."*

## OBSERVANCE OF SUNDAY

"The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." In my boyhood, since the Bible was believed to be dictated by God and the Mosaic law given by him, it is not strange that Sunday observance differed from today's.

Whatever may be our thought of the practices and beliefs of the people of that day, we must honor those men and women who were true to their convictions. Strong characters are always made by doing what one thinks to be duty. The setting apart one day in seven as a day of rest and worship meets an imperative demand of human nature. Our bodies need rest, our minds need a change. Even machines it is said, last longer if given times of rest. We need to be free from the engrossing daily duties to cultivate our spiritual nature. Sunday coming in to break the monotony of life is a great blessing.

Seventy-five years ago, Sunday was kept by christian people, not spent nor used. Today

many neither keep nor use it, but spend it thoughtlessly. Seventy five years ago no work on Sunday was thought to be right except works of necessity or mercy. There were those who tried to observe the Mosaic law so strictly that they put on the table all the food they were to eat on Sunday and they neither cleared the table nor washed dishes on Sunday. I never knew any except those who were called Scotch Covenanters who were so strict in keeping the day. In my own father's home when I was a boy, the wood and kindlings for Sunday fires were brought in on Saturday. My father never shaved on Sunday. No shoes were shined. Our reading was only the Bible and religious books and papers. Ordinary newspapers were put aside. We had no newspapers that were printed on Sunday. We often sang in the afternoon but only so called sacred hymns and we never sang new tunes. To learn them would be too much like work. Students did not study their ordinary class books. To write letters was not thought to be keeping the Sabbath.

Rev. John Todd went to Oberlin college from West Hanover, Pa., in 1834. It was a long stage ride. He reached Oberlin on Saturday but had no time to write until Sunday and thinking his

parents would be anxious to hear of his safe arrival, he ventured to write a letter on Sunday. He told me he received a reply from his father saying "If you have no time to write except Sunday, you need not write again."

One of the professors when I was in college had made an engagement to preach in Columbus but when he learned the train he must take did not reach Columbus until two hours after midnight Saturday night, he cancelled the appointment because he did not think it right to travel on Sunday.

In the church in my native village, services were held in the morning and, after a short intermission, in the afternoon. Many ate between services the lunch they brought and it was a general social time.

One man who lived several miles from church, owed another man fifty cents and seldom saw him except at church. One noon he offered him the fifty cents but he refused it saying, "I don't do business Sunday." It was thought to be wrong to ride or walk for pleasure on Sunday.

Today we seem to have gone quite to the opposite extreme and many spend the day almost recklessly in seeking pleasure.

Jesus said "The Sabbath was made for man

not man for the Sabbath" which I suppose means that we should use the hours of Sunday in such way as to give us the greatest fitness for life.

Neither the way Sunday was kept in my boyhood nor the way it is often spent in these days seem to me to be wise. Each one must judge for himself how Sunday can be used to give him most fitness for usefulness.

For myself it seems wise to make a marked distinction between Sunday and other days. I could not get most out of Sunday by playing games of tennis, croquet, baseball nor the more quiet games of checkers or dominoes, nor by attending to ordinary business, nor by pursuing the usual studies of the week. Remembering we are to seek first the Kingdom of Heaven, it would seem wise to put aside ordinary work and give more thought to our spiritual nature both in private and by uniting with others in public worship. All our days should be used to give us fitness for the best life, but Sunday it seems to me, may be most profitably used in giving more thought than on other days to cultivating the spiritual life.

It should be to us a glad day in which we should "Rejoice in the Lord," rejoice in our friends, rejoice in all the good gifts of God.

*"Idle hands are weary;*
*Selfish hearts are sad.*
*Life has many duties.*
*Have courage to hope though the way be not*
*bright.*
*The stars shine brightest in the dark night."*

## DISCOURAGED WITHOUT REASON

Luke 7:19

When Jesus was giving most abundant proof of his Messiahship John sent two of his disciples to him to ask "Art thou he that should come or look we for another." This was the same John who first announced Jesus as the Messiah. The same John who, when the people were so thrilled by his words that they were ready to make him their king, said there standeth one among you—whom ye know not but he is so much greater than I that I am not worthy even to stoop down and unloose the latchet of his shoes.

After Jesus' fame had spread through Judea, after he had healed all manner of diseases, had even raised the dead and had proclaimed the truth with convincing power and the multitude had thronged to hear his inspiring words and be healed of their diseases, after he had given abundant proof of his Messiahship, it was then that John sent to ask if he really was the Messiah.

What caused this change in John? Why did he doubt? We must look for the reason in John himself. He had been an open air preacher, his mind filled with great thoughts. He himself was thrilled by the effect of his words upon the people. He had an unwavering faith in Jesus as the Christ Isaiah had foretold seven hundred years before. Now how different his surroundings. John was shut up in a dark, damp, gloomy prison. No fresh air to breathe, no wild honey to eat, no enthusiastic people about him to be called to repentance and to be baptised by him.

His surroundings were depressing. It is not strange if because of his physical condition he became discouraged and began to doubt.

He wanted some further assurance from Jesus himself. Two of his disciples came to visit him in the prison. He sent them to ask Jesus "Art thou he that should come or look we for another." They found Jesus surrounded by an eager multitude each clamoring to be first to receive his healing touch. Jesus listened to their question, then without giving an answer turned to the work of healing. Imagine Jesus surrounded by a crowd of sick folks, blind men calling "Jesus thou son of David have mercy on us." Deaf men hoping that their ears may be opened—the lame, the

paralytic and others with every kind of infirmity eagerly waiting for his healing touch. Jesus put his fingers to the ears of the deaf and they heard. He put his hands upon blind eyes and they saw. Outside the crowd, a leper fearing to come near cried "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." Jesus went to him, laid his hand upon him and said, "I will. Be thou clean" and he was healed from that loathsome disease.

Just then perhaps was heard the sound of mourners in a funeral procession. The body of the only son of his mother, and she a widow, is being borne to the grave. At Jesus's approach they stop, the mourners cease their weeping, Jesus calls back the life and restores that son to his mother. Then he speaks to the people and tells that touching story of the prodigal son; that impressive parable of the good Samaritan; and with other parables tells them vital truth with clearness never to be forgotten. The disciples of John had looked on in increasing wonder at the healing, the raising the dead, and the marvelous words he spoke.

Jesus had not forgotten the disciples of John nor their question. He turns to them and says "Go tell John what things ye have seen and heard: the blind recive their sight, the lame walk,

the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them." This will be more convincing to John than any words I can send.

Jesus gave John something of which to think besides himself and his surroundings. The lesson to us is obvious; we may often find the cause of our discouragements in ourselves.

When we feel depressed and the way seems dark is the time when we should look for hopeful signs and trust in the Lord that we may be "kept in perfect peace." One summer day I stood on Pike's Peak. A few thousand feet below where I stood I saw the lightning playing in the dark clouds and heard the roll of the thunder.

The rain was falling and the sun was hidden from the people below but where I stood the sun was shining brightly, not a cloud in the sky above me. Soon the thunder storm passed and the village was cleaner because of the rain. "Never once since the world began has the sun ever stopped shining though often obscured by clouds, so above life's darkest clouds God's love is always shining."

*"The Christian faith is like a grand Cathedral with divinely painted windows.*

*"Standing outside you see no glory nor can possibly imagine any. Standing within, every ray of light reveals a harmony of unspeakable splendor."*

## THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

### Matt. 3:4, 1-11

It is written that Jesus was tempted in all points as we are. This need not be understood to mean that he had all the precise temptations which we have. Many situations in life he never knew by experience. He was never a school girl. He never was a broken hearted mother with wayward children, deserted by a husband she had trusted. In his own life he never had the burden and remorse of sin. We can think of many experiences and situations which Jesus did not have, yet every side in human nature may have been tested, tried, tempted in him. He knew how to sympathize with others under all circumstances in which they are placed. Jesus as he worked at the carpenter's bench in Nazareth may not have been conscious of his great mission in the world. It is written "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man." Luke 2:52.

The whole Jewish nation were looking for the Messiah foretold by the prophets centuries before. They expected one who would be King of Kings, one who would deliver them from the power of the Roman Empire, but no one thought of Jesus as the Messiah. His cousin John in clarion tones called the people to repent. In the wilderness of Judea he attracted so great crowds that the ruling Jews sent some of their number to ask him if he was the Messiah. Among others Jesus went to hear John preach. Imagine the scene. Here was John the most prominent man of the time, one whom the people were ready to follow as the Messiah if only he would announce himself as such. Among the crowd came Jesus the carpenter, a quiet young man of Nazareth.

John made the startling announcement "Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world" and a voice from heaven proclaimed "This is my beloved son." Possibly this announcement may have been as startling to Jesus as to any who heard. Perhaps he was so overwhelmed by the thought of his great mission that he wanted to get away from the crowd that he might think and hold communion with God, that he might come to himself, think of his mission and how it could be accomplished.

Possibly the thought of the time in regard to the devil influenced the expression of the writer. If we had seen Jesus in the wilderness I do not suppose we should have seen anyone with him. I suppose he was thinking "how can I best make known God to the world."

In ceremonial observances of the Mosaic law the Jews had lost the spirit of true worship. Observing the letter of the law they had lost the love in which only God's law can be kept. Though scrupulous in giving a tenth they robbed the poor. Jesus was to set in motion forces which would revolutionize the world. How could it be done? What is signified by the temptation "If thou be the son of God command this stone that it become bread." Some writer has said "If these words taken literally convey the whole temptation it would seem slight and the simple act of making bread from the stones to satisfy hunger would be a harmless one." If bread is used as a symbol of physical life, the temptation has far greater significance.

Perhaps the temptation was something like this. Shall I use superhuman power to gain an influence over men by helping them through material things? Shall I be the especial patron of physical thrift? Shall I multiply the wealth

of the world, teach men inventions, increase the harvests and commerce? In this way will not men be more quickly attracted and an influence gained over them? If I make it my first business to help men gain wealth so that they live more comfortably will they not then be more ready to listen to spiritual truth? In whatever form the temptation came we may be sure it was real and all the more powerful if he was conscious of superhuman power. Suppose we were conscious of having power over material things, to be able to make bread of stones or to turn to gold every stone upon which we should tread. What an irresistible temptation it would be to us, and we could easily persuade ourselves that we would be doing right in using such power to increase the wealth of the world.

Jesus had a far greater mission. Men readily learn the value of things seen. It is the value of the unseen, the spiritual, which they forget.

Jesus came to teach that spiritual things are of first importance, that material things are of value as an aid to the spiritual. "Man shall not live by bread alone." The one who attempts it loses his life.

Whatever Jesus may have known of his mission before the temptation, certainly afterward

there was no uncertainty, no hesitation. With an unwavering faith in God as his father, he lived his life of unselfish service.

To Jesus the spiritual was the real. The law of love controlled his life even to the tragic end.

It was the supreme triumph of his life, when upon the cross he cried, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."

*"Lives of great men all remind us*
*We can make our lives sublime,*
*And, departing, leave behind us*
*Footprints on the sands of time:—*
*Footprints, that perhaps another,*
*Sailing o'er life's stormy main,*
*A forlorn and shipwrecked brother*
*Seeing, shall take heart again."*

## THE VALUE OF ONE MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

Ps. 8:4-5

I was in the city of New York when that wonderful picture "Christ before Pilate" was first shown in this country. Mr. Wanamaker afterward bought it for one hundred thousand dollars. All there was about that picture of a material kind, the frame, the canvas, the paints, the brushes used, could have been bought probably for less than fifty dollars and Mr. Wanamaker was willing to pay ninety-nine thousand nine hundred and fifty dollars for the spiritual conception the artist had caught and been able to place upon the canvas. We have no coin in which to estimate the value of a human soul thrilled and inspired by a spiritual conception which transforms the life.

Man, male and female, is the head of God's creation, made in God's image only a little lower than God. All God's plans for the world are made

with reference to mankind, God gave them, man and woman, dominion over the beasts that roam the forests, over birds that fly in the air, over the fish in the sea. Not only is all made for man, but all that ministers to the physical or mental, is for the sake of the spiritual.

Jesus came to save the soul, to reveal God and to win men to him. He came for nothing else. He said to his disciples "As my father hath sent me even so send I you" which seems to mean that in some very important sense our work in the world is one with that of Jesus. What an honor to be called to the same work with Jesus the Christ, the work of redeeming the world. The one thing that makes life a success, is the winning of other lives from a selfseeking life to one of purity and love; where one rises above the narrow horizon of self, to the vision of service. All our work and plans are with reference to others whether we are selfish or benevolent. Men do business to get something from others or that they may be able to help them. We study that we may be able to help them or to rise above them. If men build or manufacture, if they buy or sell, if they give or steal, if they are virtuous or vicious, all is done because of others. The vital thing is the soul, the Godlike part, the immortal

part, for its value there is no measure. Jesus says "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose himself."

We lose ourselves when we lose the vision of the value of the spiritual above the material. In times of danger men value physical life more than gold. About seventy years ago a steamer was wrecked in mid-ocean with many on board returning from California carrying with them fortunes in gold, which under great hardships, they had gathered from the mines.

The few survivors said bags of gold were thrown on the deck and no one cared to add to the risk of saving his life by picking up the gold. "All that a man hath, will he give for his life," yet this physical life which must end in a few years and which we value more than material things is not our real life. The life of the soul may be lost, while we have a vigorous physical life. The loss of the soul was once thought to refer only to the unseen world we enter at death, but when faith and hope and love are lost, what of value is left? When interest in the welfare of others is lost, is there any thing for which to live? A man in my mother's native village accumulated a large property, several million dollars, but his interest in life centered in his possessions. When

on a sick bed, his mouth dry, he wanted something moist to eat, his attendant suggested baked apple. He said, "how much would they cost?" When told a peck would cost twenty-five cents, he said, "No I won't spend the money." He had no family. He left nothing to benevolence.

When he died, he left all he had, and went into the spirit world a bankrupt. He had not used his wealth to lay up treasure in Heaven.

Life is not worth living unless one tries to make the world a better place in which to live. The only treasure we can take with us from this world into the spirit land is the love of human souls who have been helped by us into a larger, truer life.

*"O little town of Bethlehem*
*How still we see thee lie.*
*Above thy deep and dreamless sleep*
*The silent stars go by.*

*"Yet in thy dark streets shineth*
*The everlasting light;*
*The hopes and fears of all the years*
*Are met in thee tonight."*

## WHO WAS JESUS

Jesus was a man who lived in Palestine almost two thousand years ago. A unique character. The history of the world furnishes no other one like Jesus. Much has been written about his nature. Many positive assertions have been made. Some have said Jesus had two natures, that he was both man and God: that sometimes he acted as a man and at other times as God.

It is not wise to be too positive in asserting our belief but to me the thought of two natures is unsatisfactory.

I think of Jesus as a perfect man in whom God dwelt in the fullest measure he can dwell in humanity. Jesus came a helpless baby and except for the visits of the wise men from the East and the Syrian shepherds, I suppose he was to his mother only what millions of babies are to their mothers today, the dearest, sweetest, most precious beings, in the world.

During the thirty silent years of which we have only one glimpse, I suppose he was to his

neighbors only an exemplary faithful man with nothing which especially distinguished him from other good and true men.

When he began his public life and spoke in the Synagogue many were astonished at his wisdom, others said he is only a common man, we have known him all his life, he is the carpenter, we know his brothers, James and Joses and Judah and Simon and his sisters.

I think God dwelt in Jesus as he dwells in other human beings who live in harmony with him, only in fuller measure. It is written "In him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead". Yes, but limited by humanity. We can only know so much of the Infinite as comes within the finite. When Jesus says "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" I think he means that he has seen all that a man can see of the Infinite God. In his book "God the Invisible King" Mr. Wells says "God is finite" and while his language seems to me to be false, he is reaching after a correct idea. The infinite includes the finite and all we know of the infinite is the finite. We believe space is of infinite extent but all we know of space is through finite measurements. We measure distances on the earth.

We estimate the distance of the sun and the

stars, some of which are so far away that it is said it takes light (though moving at an inconceivable rate), thirty years and more to reach the earth; but even such incomprehensible distances are finite. We measure time by hours, days, years and centuries. I remember an illustration of the length of eternity I heard when a boy. If a bird were to take a single grain of sand and fly away and be gone a million years, then take another grain and so remove the earth grain by grain with a million years between each flight, then eternity would only have just begun. Anything we can comprehend of the infinite is finite.

The Infinite God lived in Jesus. Jesus was God limited by humanity. In his bodily presence he could only be in one place at the same time. He was hungry. He was weary. He enjoyed the friendship of the quiet home in Bethany as a man. His temptations were real. His life was a probation as much as ours; otherwise we cannot conceive how he could be tempted as we are. Jesus was God manifested in the flesh. God spoke through him. When upon the cross Jesus prayed "Father forgive them," it was God the Father himself speaking through those lips of flesh and revealing his own heart to men. Jesus is an example to us, not in the particular

things which he did, not in the trade he followed, nor in what he ate or drank or wore. He is an example in his confident trust in God and his unwavering faith that the right will triumph. When the way seemed dark, when those in authority were plotting against him and one of his chosen disciples was a traitor he said "Be of good cheer," "Let not your heart be troubled."

He is an example in his forgiving spirit. He said forgive a repentant brother not merely seven times a day, but seventy times seven. He is an example in his teaching. "He taught many things by parables," drawing spiritual lessons from familiar things, indicating that the world is full of parables teaching spiritual truth, and if understood, all truth leads the thought to God.

He is an example in his affection. He said "Love one another as I have loved you." In all the fruits of the spirit "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness" and in every virtue he is a perfect example. Many things in the last few years might suggest that Jesus is an example in his indignation as with "A scourge of cords he drove the money changers from the temple, poured out their money and overthrew their tables;" or as he said, "Woe unto vou Scribes and Pharisees hypocrites who devour

widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers."

As Jesus "Went about doing good," his manner of healing expressed sympathy. He put his hands upon the eyes of the blind. He put his fingers to the ears of the deaf. He took by the hand the little girl he healed.

When in Peter's house and a great multitude of sick folks came, it is written "He laid his hands upon every one of them and healed them."

The healing might no doubt have been as complete without his touch but he could not have brought to them any such sense of his personal interest as came by putting "His hands upon every one of them."

The way in which we aid people has much to do with its value. Jesus' way is to us an example. Jesus revealed God as a father seeking his lost children, a father running to welcome a returning prodigal. He is an inspiration, helping us to try to reach our highest ideals.

*"The riddle of the world is understood*
*Only by one who feels that God is good.*
*As only one can feel, who makes his love*
*The ladder of his faith and climbs above*
*On the rounds of his best instincts, draws no line*
*Between mere human goodness and divine;*
*But judging God by what in him is best*
*With a child's trust leans on a father's breast."*

## PROFIT BY EXPERIENCE

"Forgetting the things that are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before I press on toward the goal."—Phil. 3:13.

We sometimes make mistakes when trying to do our best. Experience seems to show that a different course would have been wiser.

We blunder for lack of knowledge. How many times we have said "what a fool I was." You have not said it as many times as I, for I have seen more years than you. Discouragements are a test of character.

It is easy for one to be cheerful when every thing is satisfactory, when he has health and friends and property. The one who can be cheerful in misfortune, takes the prize. If when the way is dark, one can sing "It is better farther on," he has a fortune in himself. I once called on a man who was sick in bed. He had abundance of property and a family of which one might be proud. He was disposed to yield to his

bad feelings and dwell on his discouragements. When I tried to turn his thoughts to brighter things he said "when I am well I am as thankful as any body, but when I am sick I have nothing to be thankful for." Yet he had blessings more than he could number if only he would turn his thought to them.

Thinking of his bad feelings only made them worse and put his blessings out of sight. The mistakes, the failures, the follies, the sins of the past should not be a hindrance, but stepping stones aiding us to climb higher; signs of warning, that we may not fail again.

We should give the mistakes of the past only thought enough to avoid their repetition. If thinking of our past failures brings discouragement, we should turn resolutely away from all thought of them. If we cannot think of many blessings, we can at least plan to help some one who is more unfortunate than we are. They are not hard to find, on the streets, in hospitals, in jails, in homes of the poor and sick.

Our lives should be a help not a discouragement to others. Sometimes when one has lost a dear friend he mourns and will not be comforted, he thinks he has nothing for which to live and dwells on what might have been done or how

lonely the world is without the one who has gone.

Such a course destroys one's usefulness. Thoughts of departed friends should stimulate us to do more for those who remain.

I knew intimately two young people who were most happily married; the husband suddenly died, for the wife the light of the world had gone out. She was an excellent teacher but she thought she could not teach. The one she loved more than life was gone. She did not want to do any thing. She did not want to live. The trustees of an Academy offered her the Principalship. She said she could not take it. An imtimate friend said "I think it is your duty to take the place. It is wrong for you to let your grief hinder your usefulness. If the one you love so much could speak he would say, 'Do not refuse.'" After this friend's talk she wrote two letters, one accepting the place and one refusing it, she stamped and sealed them and asked a little boy to take one of the letters from her desk and mail it. She opened the letter which was left, and found the one accepting the place had been mailed. Thus her course was decided, she was an unusually successful teacher and taught for forty years.

We cannot forget and it is not desirable that

we should forget the friends who have gone, but our loss should make us more sympathetic. Our love for those who have gone should make us more ready to aid in the work they would have been glad to do.

There are those who like to recount their sad experiences, the slights, the slanders, the hard times, the unpleasant things, but this is not helpful, to them or to others. If we have a sore finger it would not be well to tear off the bandage and open the sore anew, to show to every friend how bad it had been, nor is it well to rehearse our sad experiences unless it may encourage some one. "Forgetting the things that are behind let us press forward." Experience should help us in climbing toward our highest ideals.

*"The fool hath said in his heart 'There is no God,' but to one who sees in the world about him, marks of the Creator's hand, 'The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night showeth knowledge.'"*

## THE BIBLE

There is no other book like the Bible; it is made up of sixty-six books in one. It was written by many persons, differing widely from each other in knowledge, and in the positions occupied in society; kings, peasants, fishermen, men with limited education, and those who had the best education the time could give. From first to last the writing of the Bible covered more than one thousand years. It opens with an account of the creation. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." It ends with a vision of a new heaven and a new earth into which no sin can come.

It contains messages from God, and is a book whose value is above all price. Some indication of its value may be had by comparing countries where it has freely circulated with those where the masses of the people have never seen the Bible. In my life time, there has been a very great change in the thought of christian people in regard to the Bible, concerning verbal in-

spiration, the value of certain books and other things which I need not now mention. Passing by, for the present, all disputed points, in many things there is substantial agreement. All agree that the literature of the Bible is worthy of thoughtful study. If interested in dramatic writing, the book of Job is a drama of wonderful power. If looking for pathos, the plea of Judah for the release of Benjamin is a gem in literature. If you want thrilling stories in real life you have the story of Moses, of Joseph, of Elijah, of Daniel, and of others.

Some fifty years ago Dr. Tarbox of Boston, had a Japanese student learning English. They read together a few verses each day, the story of Joseph. He told me he had never seen any one more interested in a work of fiction, than was this Japanese in the story of Joseph. He said it had a new interest to him in seeing the eagerness with which this Japanese studied it.

If you want forcible illustrations you may find them in both the Old and New Testaments. "As far as the East is from the West, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." How much more forcible than if the writer had said as far as the North is from the South; for they are fixed points: but you may travel East or

West entirely around the earth and never find either East or West "For East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet."

"Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be white as snow, though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool." More than any other colors, scarlet and crimson are supposed to be fixed colors. The tenderness of God is expressed in the words "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him."

The parables of the Bible express the truth very forcibly as in the Vine and the Bramble in Judges 9:12-15: or the good Samaritan; or the prodigal son and other parables of Jesus. If interested in proverbs where can you find another collection of proverbs equal to those in the Bible?

Some writers of the Bible would be great in any age. The prophet Isaiah writing more than seven hundred years B. C. had a remarkable conception of the ideal man when he wrote, "A man shall be as a hiding place from the wind, a covert from the tempest, as streams of water in a dry place, as the shade of a great rock in a weary land." In an age of darkness his writings are full of hope. He warns the people of the results of sin, but inspires them with the certainty of the good time coming if they repent.

He wrote with an unwavering faith in the coming of the Messiah: his writings are full of that optimism which gives the assurance of better days.

In many books of the Bible we find the same hopefulness and the call to rejoice in the Lord, though some of them wrote under very depressing conditions. We have only a meager report of the life and teachings of Jesus but they have a value above all price. For two thousand years the words of Jesus have brought comfort to those in sorrow.

They are full of hope and cheer. In unmistakable terms they make known God, as our father, more ready than earthly parents to give good gifts to those who ask him. Jesus speaks with certainty of the immortal life, the life of the spirit after these bodies have passed away.

In all this, and much more that might be said, christian people agree.

The one purpose of the Bible is that for which Jesus came; to reveal God and to persuade men to be reconciled to God.

The supreme test by which all the books of the Bible, as well as other books, and our own lives, are to be tested, is the life and teaching of Jesus.

*"Could we but draw back the curtain*
*That surrounds each other's lives*
*Often we should find them better,*
*Purer than we judge we should.*
*We should love each other better*
*If we only understood."*

## HOW TO SEE THE BRIGHTEST SIDE OF LIFE

Prov. 28:11-16 Prov. 27:17-19

"As in water, face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." Prov. 27:19. Proverbs are full of thoughtful suggestions touching life at almost every point. These words "As in water face answereth to face so the heart of man to man" are easily understood. As you stand by a clear, still, mountain lake you see mirrored from its surface, the trees, the flowers, anything on the margin of the lake, the sky overhead, or your own face, reflected as in a mirror.

As you see your own face reflected above the water, so in the world, the disposition you show to others, reflects back to you in kind. If one boy strikes another, he is likely to receive a blow in return. If some one calls you a liar, if you do not say you're another, you feel like saying it.

If you show a generous spirit in dealing with others it awakens the same spirit in them. If

you are selfish, close, stingy, you are likely to see the worst side in them. The surest way to see the brightest side of life is to make that which is nearest you bright, and the brightness will come back to you. This principle may be applied in daily life.

In training children show them by example, what you wish them to be. In speaking to them use such language as you wish them to use. Show to them the same kindness you wish them to show. If in judging another we can in thought put ourselves in his place, it will help us to form a correct judgment. It may not be easy for us to remember how we felt when we were children nor to know how we should feel in the place of those with whom we have dealings when we never have been and never expect to be in such places, but it is worth while to use our imagination to get a new view point.

In correcting another's faults, it is essential that the kindness of our hearts be manifest, rather than the desire to show another his fault.

I heard a man tell this experience. A mischievous boy threw dirt and stones at his house. One day when he was watering his lawn this boy was passing and he thought it a good opportunity to punish him. He gave him a good wetting.

What was the effect? Did the boy say he was sorry and beg for mercy. Not much. He grabbed his hands full of mud and threw it on the man.

There was no love shown in turning the hose on the boy, and it aroused the boy's worst side. It was the old spirit of "An eye for an eye." I knew another man who tried a different plan. He had a peach tree just beginning to bear fruit. One evening three boys were in the street together. One said "I know where there are some peaches." Another said "let's get some." They went around to the back side of the lot but the man who owned the peaches was there first, and they ran too fast to be caught. He knew only one of the boys. In the night he thought what will do the boys most good.

In the morning he found there were three peaches ripe enough to eat. These he picked and took to the boy he knew, and asked him to give one each to the other boys. For several years after, there was abundance of peaches and the boys lived in the neighborhood but the peaches were never stolen. One who is thoughtful, and does something for our comfort, makes us feel like doing something in return.

I was once on a train going to Boston. There

was only one vacant seat in the car. It was near me. At Peabody several passengers came into the car, one a woman with a baby in her arms. She did not at once see any vacant seat and I motioned her to the seat near me. In the vacant seat were two small bundles belonging to a woman sitting in the other end. I said shall I put your bundles in the rack? She said "no," in a tone which attracted attention. The bundles were very small and could be easily held in the hands. The woman with the baby had come and I said, "take my seat," as the woman did not offer to take up her bundles. Some one said, "I'd throw those bundles on the floor," I said "no; I would just as soon stand."

As the train came into Salem I saw the woman intended to leave, and I said "Shall I assist you off the car?" and picking up the bundles I helped her off, as politely as I could. Her better side was touched and she began to apologize. It is probable that another time she would be more inclined to accommodate than if the bundles had been thrown on the floor. Disagreeable people have a better side: let us try to find it by showing them our best.

*"Rejoice, O world of troubled men,*
*For peace is coming back again.*
*'Twill be the peace the Master left*
*To hush the world of peace bereft—*
*The peace proclaimed in lyric cries*
*That night the angels broke the skies.*
*Love, and not hate must come to birth—*
*Christ and not Cain must rule the earth."*

## THE MEANING OF EASTER

John 20:1-19

The celebration of Easter means, that for two thousand years the christian world has believed in the resurrection of Jesus. If Jesus rose from the dead it is convincing proof of the future life after these bodies have passed away. The change in the life of the disciples which came so soon after the crucifixion, is to me satisfactory proof that they knew that Jesus was alive, that he appeared to them and assured them that he would be with them always in spirit.

Imagine if possible the disappointment of the disciples when Jesus was put to death. He had repeatedly tried to prepare them for his going away, but they could not understand the meaning of his words. To the last they expected he was to set up a kingdom in this world which should be greater than the Roman Empire. He was to be king of kings.

When Jesus was put to death it was an end

to all their hopes. They were afraid to acknowledge that they had been his disciples. They were afraid to meet except secretly. It was to them an overwhelming disappointment.

They thought it was an end to all Jesus's plans and for the future they knew not what to do. Pass over forty days and note the change.

Peter, who was so afraid that he denied that he knew Jesus, speaks so boldly and convincingly, that 3000 in one day join the disciples. They have no more secret meetings. They have no fear of Jewish rulers or of Roman officers. Peter and John, as foremost among them, were arrested and brought before the highest court among the Jews and commanded not to speak any more in the name of Jesus. Listen to the words of this timid Peter who only forty days before was afraid to be known as a disciple of Jesus.

Standing before that august assembly the Jewish Sanhedrin, he said, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to harken to you more than unto God judge ye, for we cannot but speak the things we saw and heard."

Peter was not disrespectful to those highest in authority who commanded them not to speak at all in the name of Jesus. He says you must judge what you think is right but we must speak

what we know, whatever the consequences. No infidel, no disbeliever in Jesus has ever offered an explanation of the change which so suddenly came over the disciples.

No one has ever denied that this change did come, for to deny it one must deny the history of the christian world for two thousand years.

Their words were so convincing that many, many millions became christians notwithstanding the bitter persecution of the Roman government. So determined was Rome to crush the new religion that three million christians were put to death in the first three centuries but "The blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church" and converts multiplied wherever the good news of the Gospel was made known.

Three millions, suffering martyrdom for their faith, were enough to show that there was something vital in that faith.

When Constantine came to the throne he perceived that there was a power in this new religion. He not only forbade further persecution of christians but proclaimed christianity as the religion of the Empire.

It is not necessary that we should try to explain the different accounts of the resurrection nor to understand the mystery of Jesus's appearing and

disappearing. It is enough to know that he convinced the disciples that he was alive. What then does Easter mean to us?

It means that we, made in God's image, are immortal. It means that within each of us is something we call the soul, our real self, which looks out through these eyes, which hears through these ears, which feels, which loves and hates and reasons, which does not die when the life goes out of these bodies. Easter gives a vision of the immortal life, makes it certain that we may here and now enter upon that immortal life.

Easter brought to those early disciples a faith that could not be shaken, an inspiration and enthusiasm that no persecution could take from them. There is no character in the world better attested than that of Jesus Christ. He should be to us, each one, the supreme power in our lives to redeem us from selfishness.

*"Though never shown by word or deed,*
*Within us lies some germ of power*
*As lies unguessed within the seed,*
*The latent flower."*

## ABRAHAM LINCOLN THE GREATEST AMERICAN

The United States has been rich in having both in official and in private life many men and women of high ideals who have unselfishly given their thought to make this the best government in the world. Without detracting any thing from the reputation of the great men and women who have grown up in this country, I think we can say without question, Abraham Lincoln was easily the greatest American. From the humblest origin, born in a log house with a dirt floor, from a shiftless father but a superior mother, he rose to the highest place in the gift of the people of the United States.

With a back woods training, far from society called polished "he added dignity and glory, to the office which had been so ably filled by Washington, Adams and their successors."

When President, he said, "All I am and all I hope to be, I owe to my sainted mother." Lin-

coln was great in his simplicity. He did nothing for show. There was an entire absence of pompous ceremony.

While Lincoln was President, Lord Lyons a bachelor, came to this country to make official announcement of the marriage of the Prince of Wales. The announcement was made with all the ceremony of an official of Great Britain. It was at a grand party at which were representatives of all the countries of the world.

The President of the United States was expected to make a speech in reply. Mr. Seward and others were nervous lest President Lincoln might not be equal to the occasion, but after the pompous announcement of the marriage of the Prince of Wales, President Lincoln relieved the tension by replying, "Lord Lyons, go thou and do likewise."

Lincoln was a great orator. He had little opportunity for education in the schools, but you may search the orations of Cicero and Demosthenes, and others, ancient and modern, in vain, for anything superior to his Gettysburg speech or his second inaugural address. Lincoln was great in his kindness. Many anecdotes are told of his kindness to animals as well as to people: how he waded an ice cold river, to bring a little

dog that had been left behind when the family moved, the dog running up and down the opposite bank barking, but afraid to plunge in. Of his stopping on his way to court to restore two young birds, too young to fly back to their nest.

How he stopped and dismounted from his horse,—when riding with a company of lawyers, —to relieve a pig which was stuck in the mud. When the lawyers laughed, he said, "The children of the owner of the pig, might perhaps have had to go barefoot if the pig was lost."

After his tragic death, a woman living in Springfield, Illinois, his home city, told of his kindness to her when a little girl. She was to have her first outing in a visit to an aunt. She was waiting, but the bus driver forgot to call for her trunk. She was on the porch crying, Mr. Lincoln on his way to his office saw her and asked what was the matter. When she told him he said, "Cheer up I'll carry your trunk," and putting the trunk on his shoulder he took her hand and saw her on board the train, then kissed her good bye and said, "Now have a good time." It was an act of kindness she never forgot, and when a grown woman, she told the story with moist eyes.

Mr. Lincoln was President at the most trying

time in the history of the country. Only a few weeks after his inauguration Fort Sumter was fired upon. Eleven states seceded from the union. In several other states there was a strong disunion sentiment. A desperate fight was on, in which family friends were in opposing armies.

Military men said strict discipline was essential but when there was a military trial and one condemned to be shot, President Lincoln as head of the army and navy inquired into the case, and if any extenuating circumstances could be found, he suspended sentence or pardoned.

An old telegrapher in the Washington office during the war said, "President Lincoln always brought such telegrams to the office himself and waited until a reply was received."

Probably the most trying time was in 1862. Should the slaves be freed as a war measure? The Cabinet did not agree. The people of the North were divided, some said, "Let the South go." Many said, "Free the slaves." Others said, "You have no right to interfere with slavery." England wanted the cotton the Southern states had to sell.

The government of Great Britain was hostile toward the United States. The British people were suffering for the cotton. The government

of Great Britain seemed on the point of recognizing the Southern Confederacy. In several battles the union army had been defeated. The Confederate army under General Lee was in Maryland and flushed with victory was marching toward Washington.

The burdens of the nation were upon President Lincoln. One near him said he had grown old ten years in six months.

The Emancipation Proclamation giving freedom to all slaves in states which should be in rebellion on January first, 1863, had been written.

Should it be issued with the Cabinet divided, the people of the North divided and Great Britain hostile? The President could not sleep.

He prayed for wisdom. If victory should come to the Union army he said he would take it as an indication that the time had come to issue the Proclamation. Perhaps the Southern states would stop fighting rather than risk having the slaves set free. It was past midnight, a hurried step was heard outside, there was a tapping at his door: "A telegram, important."

With trembling hand he tore open the envelope and read "Lee's army defeated and retreating." Early in the morning a Cabinet meeting was

called. The tension was tremendous. The strain was almost too great to be borne.

President Lincoln came into the meeting and took from his pocket a small book and read a laughable story by Artemus Ward. All laughed except Mr. Stanton, secretary of war. He said, "Mr. President this is a solemn occasion, why do you laugh?" President Lincoln replied, "I laugh because I must not cry." The tension was relieved. President Lincoln read the Proclamation of Emancipation slowly and said, "The time has come. I have made a solemn promise to God. Today I shall issue the Proclamation."

In a few minutes the news was flashed around the world that four million slaves would be free January 1st, 1863, if the states were still in rebellion. Lincoln lived with malice toward none and with charity for all.

*He was great in his simplicity, great in his kindness, great in his wisdom, great in his conceptions of truth and right, and great in the love which endureth all things,—the greatest American.*

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